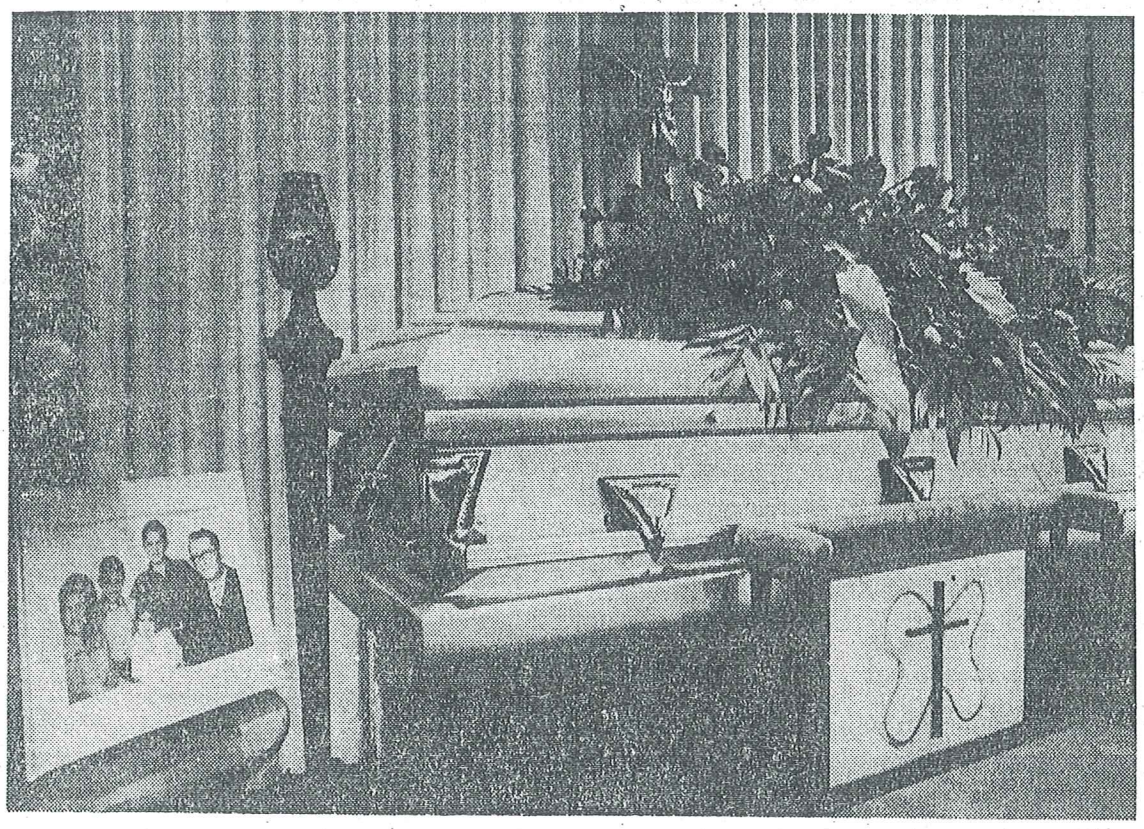

A family portrait stands beside the casket of New Orleans Police Ptn. Paul A. "Butch" Persigo prior to funeral services for the officer, one of three policemen slain by sniper fire Sunday. (States-Item photo by James W. Guillot.)

Tears for a Fallen Friend

See related stories on Page 2.

By LANNY THOMAS

Friends, relatives and fellow policemen of slain New Orleans policeman Paul A. "Butch" Persigo joined his widow today in mourning and preparing for the painful ordeal of his funeral.

A spray of roses—symbolic of Persigo's avid interest in rose gardening — covered his silver-gray coffin at the Jefferson funeral home of Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Inc.

Funeral services for Persigo, one of three policemen killed my sniper fire Sunday at the Downtown Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge, were to be held later today at St. Edward the Confessor Church in Metairie. Interment was to follow in Garden of Memories Cemetery.

The widow of the 33-year-old policeman fought back tears as she arrived at the funeral home this morning among friends trying to comfort her.

The coffin was surrounded by wreaths of flowers, many of them from Persigo's associates on the police force. Nearby was a family photograph—Persigo, his wife and three children.

Prominent among the flower displays was a wreath from the police department's motorcycle division of which Persigo was a member. Flowers were arranged in the official emblem of the motorcycle division.

Mrs. Betty Dufour, a neighbor and close friend of the Persigo family, said she had known them for years. "I just can't accept this tragedy," she said.

Wiping back tears, she said, "Paul and Judy had the most beautiful relationship anyone ever had. They could look at each other and settle differences."

Mrs. Dufour said Mrs. Persigo has been "horrified" since the tragedy over the thoughts that her three-year-old daughter, Holly, will not remember her father. "They were so happy when she was born," said Mrs. Dufour.

There are two boys who are older.

Mrs. Dufour described the Persigos as "one of the most delightful couples in our neighborhood. We all enjoyed them. We had a good time together."

Besides his widow, the former Judith Lynn Becker, and the daughter, Persigo is survived by two sons, Mark, 10, and Steven, 8; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Persigo of Metairie; a brother, Charles, of Harahan, and a sister, Mrs. Gayle Freeman of Sarepta, La.